

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 IO-10 ISO-00 SCCT-01 SY-04 SS-15 NSC-05

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SP-02 PRS-01 SAJ-01

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R 081653Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8900

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, IT

SUBJECT: PLO REPRESENTATIVE IN ROME

REF: ROME 14511, 21 OCT 1974

1. THE UNOFFICIAL PLO REPRESENTATIVE IN ROME NIMR HAMMAD (REFTEL), APPEARS GRADUALLY TO BE ENHANCING HIS STATUS. HE CONTINUES TO MOVE IN DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES, ARAB AND OTHER, IS PUBLICLY CHARACTERIZED BY ANSA, THE ITALIAN NEWS AGENCY, AS QUOTE THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PLO IN ITALY UNQUOTE, AND HAS ESTABLISHED INFORMAL LIAISON WITH THE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY.

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2. FONMIN SOURCES CLAIM TO BE DISCOMFITED BY NIMR'S INCREASING VISIBILITY. THEY SAY, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAS DONE NOTHING SO FAR ON WHICH THEY COULD TAKE ACTION. NIMR IS QUIETLY INTRODUCED IN SOCIAL CIRCLES AS QUOTE THE PLO REPRESENTATIVE UNQUOTE BUT, WITH ONE EXCEPTION, HAS ADVANCED NO CLAIM FOR DIPLOMATIC OR COMPARABLE PRIVILEGES. HIS STATUS IN THE COUNTRY AS AN EMPLOYEE OF THE ARAB LEAGUE IS IN ORDER, IS COMPARABLE TO THAT OF PLO REPS IN LONDON AND PARIS, AND HE BEHAVES LAWFULLY. ON THE ONE OCCASION HE REQUESTED HE BE RECEIVED AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, HE IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN QUOTE FIRMLY UNQUOTE REBUFFED.

3. COMMENT: WE DOUBT THAT NIMR'S PRESENCE, STATUS OR ACTIVITIES ARE IN FACT AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE GOI. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICERS ADMIT USING HIM AS A TWO-WAY CHANNEL VIA EXCHANGES ON SOCIAL OCCASIONS, INCLUDING OCCASIONAL LUNCHEES OR DINNERS THEY SPONSOR. WHETHER OR NOT HE PROVES A USEFUL CHANNEL, THE FORIEGN MINISTRY PROBABLY FEELS THE TACIT GESTURE TOWARD THE PALESTINIANS WON'T HURT AND CAN HELP ITALY'S DEALINGS WITH THE ARAB WORLD. VOLPE

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